

Sam Morrill Flanagan
With input from Ora Taylor

Sam Morrill Flanagan, son of John H. Flanagan and Nannie Bathsheba (Sheba) Smith was born April 22, 1902 in Farmville Township, Pitt County, NC and died February 22, 1977 in Farmville. He married Ora Tugwell in Farmville on Jan 1, 1922. He and Ora had two daughters and one son, Aileen, Ora Lee and James Leland. His middle name was that of a popular MD in the area.

Sam went to high school in Farmville. He may not have actually finished school because his father was ill and he felt his duty was to help with the farm. There is little doubt that his education was not shorted in any sense however.

Sam farmed most of his life in the Farmville community growing tobacco and other row crops mainly. He was a good farmer and adept at growing things. He and his son, Leland, put that capability to good use when they went into the nursery business. His son also developed a business in Greenville, NC to provide landscaping services. The two businesses complemented each other and both were successful.

Farming methods developed over his life span from the horse (mule) drawn implements to tractors and in many of the methods for curing tobacco harvesting. Sam often had sideline businesses such as having a truck for his own use and to haul tobacco to the market. At one time he raised chickens for sale on the local markets. He had as many as 3200 chickens in various stages of growth. His wife and daughter, Ora, helped him prepare the chickens for market to meet demand.

In order for the tobacco market to function, many people in the community took jobs on the market such as weigh masters, bookkeepers, and the like. One of the jobs Sam did was as "ticket marker." That required that he follow the sales entourage closely and mark the tickets with what the agreed upon price was. That meant he had to correctly interpretate what the auctioneer had said the price was. If you ever heard a tobacco sale, you can appreciate how difficult that was.

He was born on a farm on the "old plank road", now route 264 Alt. The farm was owned by his father and was called Cherry Hill. Sam had several brothers and sisters so it was a busy place. At some time the family moved to Farmville which was only two miles away. After marriage, he and his family farmed the Fulford farm on the Moye-Turnage Road between Lang's crossroads and Farmville. For several years he ran the Davis Hotel in Farmville, catering to tobaccoists and others. He later moved into a house on Church Street, about three blocks from the Christian Church. It was from this location he and his son operated the nursery.